

Message Text

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TAGS: ELAB, UK, ICFTU, XH

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH SOVIET WFTU OFFICIAL

SUMMARY: DURING TUC CONGRESS IN BLACKPOOL SEPTEMBER 1-5, BORIS AVERYANOV, CURRENTLY A SECRETARY OF THE WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS (WFTU) AND FORMERLY INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DIRECTOR OF THE SOVIET AUCCTU, SPOKE INFORMALLY TO SEVERAL LONDON-BASED LABOR ATTACHES, ON A NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL LABOR ISSUES. THESE INCLUDED THE ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ETUC), THE SHELEPIN VISIT, PORTUGAL AND OTHER MATTERS. END SUMMARY

1. ETUC - AVERYANOV SAID THAT, ALTHOUGH "SOME OF MY FRIENDS IN MOSCOW MAY NOT AGREE", THE MOST IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION ORGANIZATION IS THE ETUC. HE SAID IT WAS ONE OF THE BEST INSTRUMENTS FOR FURTHERING DETENTE, "PARTICULARLY AFTER HELSINKI." ITS GROWING IMPORTANCE, HE SAID, HAD INCURRED THE WRATH OF AFL-CIO PRESIDENT GEORGE MEANY BECAUSE HE "WAS AGAINST DETENTE" AND THAT OF ICFTU GENERAL SECRETARY OTTO KERSTEN BECAUSE THE ETUC WAS FURTHER WEAKENING THE ICFTU AS A WORLD ORGANIZATION. THE SOVIET TRADE UNION OFFICIAL BELIEVES THE ETUC WILL BE EXPANDING INTO EASTERN EUROPE IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE--AND EVEN ULTIMATELY WOULD INCLUDE THE SOVIET AUCCTU ITSELF. AND, HE ADDED--SOMEWHAT FACETIOUSLY, AND IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION--THAT IT MIGHT VERY WELL ALSO INCLUDE UNIONS FROM THE US AND CANADA.

2. FOR THE SHORT-TERM, HOWEVER, AVERYANOV THOUGHT THE FRENCH CGT WILL BE THE NEXT ORGANIZATION TO BECOME AN AFFILIATE OF THE ETUC ALTHOUGH IT SHOULD NOT HAVE TO CHANGE ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WFTU BECAUSE OF IT. HE NOTED THAT AFFILIATES OF THE WORLD CONFEDERATION OF LABOR (WCL) WERE ABLE TO MAINTAIN THEIR FULL MEMBERSHIP AFTER THEY BECAME MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN GROUP. HE CHARACTERIZED THE ITALIAN CGIL'S ASSUMPTION OF ASSOCIATE STATUS WITH THE WFTU AS A WAY "TO CRAWL INTO THE ETUC" ALTHOUGH HE UNDERSTOOD THE ITALIANS' NEED TO DO SO IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ORDER TO "DEVELOP NATIONAL TRADE UNION UNITY." AFTER THE CGT BECOMES AN AFFILIATE OF THE ETUC, HE THEN FORESEES THE ROMANIANS--RATHER THAN THE YUGOSLAVS--AS THE FIRST EASTERN EUROPEAN GROUP TO JOIN SINCE ROMANIANS LIKE TO BE "THE LOCOMOTIVE WHICH LEADS THE TRAIN." THE ETUC, HE SAID, WOULD NOT DISPLACE THE ICFTU OR THE WFTU, BUT HE EMPHASIZED HIS VIEW THAT THE EUROPEAN ORGANIZATION WAS

THE MOST TRULY IMPORTANT WORLD ORGANIZATION FOR THE FUTURE.

3. THE SHELEPIN VISIT - AVERYANOV WAS ASKED WHY, IN VIEW OF THE EXPECTED HOSTILITY TO THE SHELEPIN VISIT IN THE UK, HE HAD DECIDED TO CARRY OUT HIS VISIT. HE REPLIED THAT UP TO WHEN THE "DAILY MAIL" EMBARKED ON A MAJOR ANTI-SHELEPIN CAMPAIGN, SOVIET OFFICIALS PERCEIVED NO REAL DIFFICULTY. THE "DAILY MAIL", HE SAID, HAD IN EFFECT LAID DOWN A CHALLENGE TO THE SOVIETS TO CANCEL THE VISIT WHICH HE ADVISED SHELEPIN ABSOLUTELY NOT TO ACCEPT. AVERYANOV SAID THAT THE OPPOSITION TO THE VISIT WAS REALLY LAUNCHED BY JEWISH GROUPS IN THE UK AND HE NOTED, HE SAID, THAT MOST OF THE MP'S SIGNING ANTI-SHELEPIN STATEMENTS WERE OF JEWISH ORIGIN. THE SOVIET OFFICIAL SAID THAT SIX MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL, WHOM HE WOULD NOT NAME, SEPARATELY URGED THE SOVIETS TO MAINTAIN THE VISIT. AVERYANOV ALSO DENIED THAT SHELEPIN WAS DISMISSED FROM HIS POST AS A RESULT OF THE VISIT, IMPLYING THAT IT WAS DUE TO "OTHER REASONS".

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4. PORTUGAL - AVERYANOV TOOK EXCEPTION TO A PORTION OF AN ARTICLE BY JOHN TERODE ("GUARDIAN", SEPTEMBER 3) IN WHICH AVERYANOV WAS QUOTED AS TELLING HIS PORTUGUESE COMMUNIST FRIENDS: "BE WISE. THERE ARE PLENTY OF PROGRESSIVE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS. COOPERATE WITH THEM, INSTEAD OF EXCLUDING THEM, OR YOU WILL PROVOKE CIVIL WAR BETWEEN YOU. BUT SO FAR THE COMMUNISTS ARE BEHAVING LIKE BLOODY SECTARIANS. I CAN UNDERSTAND WHY. THEY LED THE UNDERGROUND RESISTANCE AND THEY WANT THE REWARDS. BUT IT CAN'T GO ON." (AVERYANOV SAID HE WAS MISQUOTED.)

5. IN TERMS OF THE GENERAL POLITICAL SCENE, AVERYANOV TURNED ASIDE, CONTEMPTUOUSLY, THE EMBASSY LABATT'S STATEMENT THAT THE COMMUNISTS AND THEIR ALLIES APPEARED DETERMINED TO DESTROY THE RESULTS OF A FREE ELECTION. HE SAID THAT THE SOCIALISTS HAD GOTTEN ONLY 38 PERCENT OF THE VOTE, LARGELY WITH THE HELP OF THE CHURCH AND THE VOTES OF ILLITERATE FARMWORKERS AND THAT MANY WHO VOTED FOR THEM COULD NOT DISTINGUISH BETWEEN SOCIALIST AND COMMUNISTS. THE COUNTRY, HE ADDED, WAS NOT YET READY FOR THE KIND OF DEMOCRACY WHICH EXISTS IN OTHER MORE ADVANCED INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES.

6. EXPELLED SOVIET DIPLOMAT - RESPONDING TO A QUESTION

ABOUT MR. KLIMOV, WHO HAD BEEN LABOR ATTACHE AT THE SOVIET EMBASSY IN LONDON UNTIL HE AND MANY OTHER SOVIET OFFICIALS WERE EXPELLED IN 1972, AVERYANOV SAID THAT KLIMOV - NOW IN MOSCOW - WAS "UPSET AND HURT" BECAUSE HE BELIEVES HIMSELF PERFECTLY INNOCENT OF ANY WRONG DOING. THIS WAS RECOGNIZED, HE ADDED, BY BRITISH TRADE UNION DELEGATIONS TO THE USSR SINCE THEY HAVE NEVER OBJECTED TO THE INCLUSION OF KLIMOV IN SOCIAL OR OTHER MEETINGS IN WHICH THEY WERE INVOLVED. AVERYANOV ALSO SAID THAT KLIMOV WAS MERELY THE INNOCENT VICTIM OF A "POLITICAL" ACT BY THE BRITISH AUTHORITIES. (VICTOR MAKHNATCHEV, A RECENTLY ARRIVED SOVIET EMBASSY OFFICIAL, IDENTIFIES HIMSELF AS THE CURRENT LABOR ATTACHE.)

7. ISRAELI/ARAB ISSUE - AVERYANOV STRONGLY DENIED THAT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE AUCCTU HAD CONSIDERED RECOGNITION OF ISRAEL TRADE UNION FEDERATION, HISTRADUT, AT THE TIME OF SHELEPIN'S TALKS WITH THE TUC LEADERSHIP IN LONDON. HE TURNED AWAY QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE OPENING UP DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL, DECLARING THAT THIS WAS A CONCERN OF GOVERNMENTS AND NOT UNIONS, ALTHOUGH HE NOTED THAT THE USSR WAS THE FIRST TO RECOGNIZE THE STATE OF ISRAEL. HE ADDED THAT DURING A VISIT TO THE PLO IN SYRIA, HE HAD TOLD THEIR REPRESENTATIVES THAT THEY SHOULD RECOGNIZE THE EXISTENCE OF THE STATE "WHICH WAS A FACT."

8. PERSONAL NOTE - AVERYANOV, DURING A SEPARATE CONVERSATION, SAID HE WAS FINDING IT DIFFICULT TO GET USED TO THE BUREAUCRACY OF THE WFTU IN PRAGUE, WHERE HE IS THE SECRETARY IN CHARGE OF PUBLICATIONS. HE SAID "WHEN I WAS IN MOSCOW AND WANTED A PAMPHLET IN FOUR LANGUAGES, I HAD NO PROBLEM AT ALL." IN PRAGUE, SUCH A REQUEST RESULTS IN A LONG AND TEDIOUS EFFORT TO ACHIEVE IT. HE WAS DETERMINED, HOWEVER, TO IMPROVE THE PUBLISHED OUTPUT OF THE ORGANIZATION.

9. DURING THE BLACKPOOL CONFERENCE, THE SOVIET OFFICIAL (WHO IS SHORT AND STOUT AND HAS A "CHERUBIC" OUTWARD APPEARANCE) COULD BE SEEN FREQUENTLY "BUTTON-HOLING" DELEGATES, HAVING COFFEE WITH THEM IN THE LOUNGE AT THE BLACKPOOL WINTER GARDEN, AND IN GENERAL MAKING HIMSELF HIGHLY VISIBLE AND ACTIVE. (HIS SUCCESSOR IN THE AUCCTU AS INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DIRECTOR, VESEVOLAV MOZHAEV, IS EXPECTED TO CONFER SHORTLY WITH TUC OFFICIALS IN LONDON.)

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